

Steve Rowe

Hamel & Rowe Hardware

Feb 14, 2011

Secretary Jennifer Johnson
Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
20th Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20551

Dear Secretary Johnson:

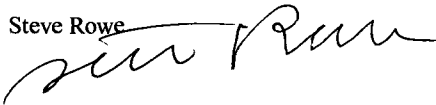
As credit card companies get richer on the backs of small business owners, I wonder who is fighting for us. The large fees that are charged to business owners when a customer uses a debit card are constantly going up, making it difficult to turn a profit. Yet, what choice do we have?

Debit card usage is increasing as more and more banks offer the convenience of rewards and society turns to a more cashless future. When you run a retail business, this can be a hard transition. We are faced with higher merchant fees each year. Thankfully, debit cards are not a huge part of our business right now, but it is increasing every month. I have no other choice than to pass the increase in costs I see to my customers. I don't enjoy these price hikes any more than they do and it is a fine line to walk. If I increase prices too much, I will lose business, while accepting the cards raises my expenses. We have been open since 1981 and are a part of ACE Hardware. Because I care about the welfare of our ten employees, I would hate to be forced to make cuts because debit transaction fees had become too high.

Swipe reform is needed. The amendments proposed last year to place limits on merchant fees and offer small business owners alternatives to save money are incredible. This is a huge step in proving that small business is important to our leaders. Please continue your support and allow the limits to become permanent.

Thank you for your service,

Steve Rowe

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Rowe", written over the printed name.